1969 United States Grand Prix

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The **1969 United States Grand Prix** was a Formula One motor race held on October 5, 1969, at the Watkins Glen Grand Prix Race Course in Watkins Glen, New York. It was race 10 of 11 in both the 1969 World Championship of Drivers and the 1969 International Cup for Formula One Manufacturers. The 108-lap race was won by Lotus driver Jochen Rindt after he started from pole position. Piers Courage finished second for the Brabham team and BRM driver John Surtees came in third.

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1969 United States Grand Prix

Race details	
Date	October 5, 1969
Official name	XII United States Grand Prix
Location	Watkins Glen Grand Prix Race Course Watkins Glen, New York
Course	Permanent road course
Course length	3.78 km (2.35 mi)
Distance	108 laps, 408.2 km (253.8 mi)
Weather	Dry with temperatures reaching up to 64 °F (18 °C); wind speeds up to 10.1 miles per hour (16.3 km/h)[1]
Pole position	
Driver	Jochen Rindt — Lotus-Ford
Time	1:03.62
Fastest lap	
Driver	Jochen Rindt — Lotus-Ford
Time	1:04.34 on lap 69
Podium	
First	Jochen Rindt — Lotus-Ford
Second	Piers Courage — Brabham-Ford
Third	John Surtees — BRM
Lap leaders	[show]

Qualifying [edit source]

Qualifying classification [edit source]

Pos.	Driver	Constructor	Time	No
1	Jochen Rindt	Lotus-Ford	**1:03,62**	1
2	Denis Hulme	McLaren-Ford	1:03,65	2
3	Jackie Stewart	Matra-Ford	1:03,77	3
4	Graham Hill	Lotus-Ford	1:04,05	4
5	Jo Siffert	Lotus-Ford	1:04,06	5
6	Bruce McLaren	McLaren-Ford	1:04,22	6
7	Jean-Pierre Beltoise	Matra-Ford	1:04,29	7
8	Jacky Ickx	Brabham-Ford	1:04,32	8
9	Piers Courage	Brabham-Ford	1:04,58	9
10	Jack Brabham	Brabham-Ford	1:04,80	10
11	John Surtees	B.R.M.	1:05,06	11
12	Pedro Rodríguez	Ferrari	1:05,94	12
13	Mario Andretti	Lotus-Ford	1:06,52	13
14	Jackie Oliver	B.R.M.	1:06,55	14
15	Johnny Servoz-Gavin	Matra-Ford	1:07,13	15
16	Pete Lovely	Lotus-Ford	1:07,55	16
17	Silvio Moser	Brabham-Ford	1:08,20	17
18	George Eaton	B.R.M.	1:11,27	18

Race [edit source]

Summary [edit source]

Jochen Rindt survived an early duel with newly crowned Champion and close friend Jackie Stewart and claimed his first Grand Prix victory, the first ever by an Austrian. Piers Courage finished second, driving a Frank Williams-prepared Brabham and out-racing Jack Brabham himself and Jacky Ickx in the works Brabhams. John Surtees took third place at The Glen for the second straight year, this time in a BRM.

> After five wins in his first four seasons, Jackie Stewart won five of the first six races in 1969, and his first Driver's Championship was already in his pocket when the teams came to North America for the final three races.
>
> Jochen Rindt, on the other hand, had flirted with his first victory throughout the season, his first with Lotus, but without success. He had started on the pole four times, led in five of the nine races, and taken back-to-back podiums in the two preceding races in Italy and Canada.

Also driving for Lotus were the previous year's Champion, Graham Hill, and American Mario Andretti, making just his third F1 appearance of the season. Andretti was doing his best with the controversial and soon-to-be-abandoned four-wheel-drive Type 63, while Hill and Rindt were in standard 49Bs.

Friday practice was wet and virtually meaningless, except that it showed the four-wheel-drive Matra and Lotus cars had little or no advantage even in the rain, and the concept quickly disappeared from modern GP racing. Saturday was dry, however, and Rindt won the battle for pole, his fifth of the season, beating Denny Hulme's McLaren by three-hundredths in the last fifteen minutes of the session. The rest of the top six were Stewart, Hill, Jo Siffert (in a Rob Walker-entered Lotus) and Bruce McLaren.

On Sunday, before a crowd of over 100,000, Rindt jumped into the lead at the start, while Hulme struggled with a bent gear linkage and lost places to Stewart and Hill. Andretti charged ahead from his thirteenth-place grid position, and, when Brabham slowed to avoid Hulme, Andretti bumped rear wheels with the Brabham, knocking the Lotus sideways. Andretti continued for three laps, but his suspension was bent, and he retired. At the end of the first lap, the order was Rindt, Stewart, Hill, Siffert, Jean-Pierre Beltoise, Courage and Ickx.

> As they had many times during the season, Rindt and Stewart quickly separated themselves from the rest of the field. On lap 12, Rindt slid wide and allowed Stewart through. The Matra's engine was not running at full strength, however, and it was all Stewart could do to hold off the Austrian, who was bobbing and weaving on both sides, trying to get by. Rindt finally got past on the straight on lap 21, and eventually, the Scot began to fall back.

On lap 33, Stewart's car emitted a puff of smoke, and the next time around, he coasted down the pit lane with no oil pressure. Rindt now led a group of three Brabhams, with Courage ahead of the two works entries of Ickx and Brabham, by 37 seconds. On lap 62, Brabham got by Ickx and began hounding Courage. Several times, the Australian managed to pull alongside, but could not complete the pass. Ickx dropped out of the three-way fight on lap 78 when he suddenly lost oil pressure and pulled to the side of the track.

Rindt was content to maintain his cushion over Courage and Brabham, and tried not to think about all the times he had led before and not won. On lap 88, Hill spun off the track on a patch of oil and stalled. He unfastened his straps, got out of the car and push-started it, but could not refasten his belts alone. His off-track excursion had apparently punctured a rear tire, and he signaled the pit to get ready to change it. Before he made it back around, however, the tire exploded at the end of the straight and sent the Lotus cartwheeling into an embankment. Hill was thrown from the car and suffered broken bones in both legs. Later, at the hospital, he was asked by team members if he had a message to pass along to his wife. Hill replied, "Just tell her that I won't be dancing for two weeks." Hill's accident was witnessed by two fifteen-year-old boys from nearby Montrose, Pennsylvania, John Moore and Kevin Hibbard. Their eyewitness account stated that "It looked like the crash was unsurvivable. We thought he had definitely been killed."

Brabham had to break off his pursuit of Courage when his engine began sputtering for lack of fuel, and he was forced to pit on lap 93, allowing Surtees to get through into third place. Rindt crossed the line 46 seconds ahead of Courage with his long-awaited and well-deserved first win. He said, "It is just that the car held together for once, but this one makes up for all the others I have lost." Once again, the American race offered a record purse, and the total of $206,000 included $50,000 for the winner.

Classification [edit source]

Pos	No	Driver	Constructor	Laps	Time/Retired	Grid	Points
1	2	**Jochen Rindt**	**Lotus-Ford**	108	1:57:56.84	1	**9**
2	18	**Piers Courage**	**Brabham-Ford**	108	+ 46.99	9	**6**
3	14	**John Surtees**	**BRM**	106	+ 2 Laps	11	**4**
4	8	**Jack Brabham**	**Brabham-Ford**	106	+ 2 Laps	10	**3**
5	12	**Pedro Rodríguez**	**Ferrari**	101	+ 7 Laps	12	**2**
6	19	**Silvio Moser**	**Brabham-Ford**	98	+ 10 Laps	17	**1**
NC	16	Johnny Servoz-Gavin	Matra-Ford	92	Not Classified	15	
Ret	1	Graham Hill	Lotus-Ford	90	Accident	4	
Ret	7	Jacky Ickx	Brabham-Ford	77	Engine	8	
Ret	22	George Eaton	BRM	76	Engine	18	
Ret	4	Jean-Pierre Beltoise	Matra-Ford	72	Engine	7	
Ret	5	Denny Hulme	McLaren-Ford	52	Gearbox	2	
Ret	3	Jackie Stewart	Matra-Ford	35	Engine	3	
Ret	21	Pete Lovely	Lotus-Ford	25	Halfshaft	16	
Ret	15	Jackie Oliver	BRM	23	Engine	14	
Ret	10	Jo Siffert	Lotus-Ford	3	Fuel System	5	
Ret	9	Mario Andretti	Lotus-Ford	3	Suspension	13	
DNS	6	Bruce McLaren	McLaren-Ford	0	Engine	6	
Source:[2]							

Championship standings after the race [edit source]

Drivers' Championship standings

	Pos	Driver	Points
→	1	Jackie Stewart	60
→	2	Jacky Ickx	31
→	3	Bruce McLaren	26
↑ 3	4	Jochen Rindt	22
↓ 1	5	Graham Hill	19
Source: [3]			

Constructors' Championship standings

	Pos	Constructor	Points
→	1	Matra-Ford	63
↑ 1	2	Lotus-Ford	47
↓ 1	3	Brabham-Ford	45
→	4	McLaren-Ford	29 (31)
→	5	Ferrari	7
Source: [3]			

- **Note**: Only the top five positions are included for both sets of standings. Only the best 5 results from the first 6 rounds and the best 4 results from the last 5 rounds counted towards the Championship. Numbers without parentheses are Championship points; numbers in parentheses are total points scored.

References [edit source]

1. ^ "Weather information for the "1969 United States Grand Prix" ". The Old Farmers' Almanac. Retrieved 2013-11-10.
2. ^ "1969 United States Grand Prix". formula1.com. Archived from the original on 9 January 2015. Retrieved 22 December 2015.
3. ^ a b "United States 1969 - Championship • STATS F1". *www.statsf1.com*. Retrieved 21 March 2019.

Further reading [edit source]

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- Rob Walker (January, 1970). "Eleventh Grand Prix of the U.S.: Promise Fulfilled". *Road & Track*, 30-34.

Previous race: 1969 Canadian Grand Prix	FIA Formula One World Championship 1969 season	Next race: 1969 Mexican Grand Prix
Previous race: 1968 United States Grand Prix	United States Grand Prix	Next race: 1970 United States Grand Prix

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